

SPiRiT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The Blacks and Whites.

From the N. Y. Times. It really is a wonder that this country existed so long as it did, without the direct aid and encouragement of black voters. It seems to be a well-authenticated historical fact, that the Republic did get on quite comfortably for something like eighty years, while the blacks not only did not fight our battles nor control our elections. It is true there were a good many things that were not exactly as they should have been, but nevertheless the country prospered; the crops were good; the liberties of the people were protected; we went through one war with Great Britain and another with Mexico very creditably; commerce flourished; taxation was light; we paid our national debt; foreign nations envied us, and we, in turn, for the sake of keeping up good fellowship, despised them—and on the whole we got along very comfortably; and in all this we had no help from the blacks but, on the contrary, devoted a great deal of our time to abusing them and whipping them and keeping them in slavery.

But now we are told that but for the negro we should go forthwith to eternal smash. The Tribune tells us that but for the black soldiers in our armies the Rebellion would have triumphed. Our Union was saved from utter destruction only by the invincible arm of the enfranchised slaves. The whites proved utterly unequal to the task. And now nothing but black votes can save the Republican party from overthrow and the Union from ruin. Possibly all this is true; but we cannot say its truth has ever been made quite clear to us. We honor the blacks for what they did contribute to the success of the Union arms, but we cannot forget that they also lent a good deal of strength to the Confederate force. We believe it is true that no negro ever betrayed a Union man; but we are not aware that the negroes ever betrayed a Rebel soldier. Treachery is not among the sins of the negro character; they are generally faithful to the side they happen to be with. And while we would have their merits and services fully acknowledged and rewarded, we are a little tired of hearing all the credit given to them for the defeat of the Rebellion and the salvation of the Union. One reason, perhaps, of our weariness is, that we don't believe it all belongs to them. We cannot help thinking that some of it belongs to the white soldiers also.

"If the blacks are not enfranchised," says the Tribune, "Vandalism can beat General Grant for President." The Tribune evidently would not shed many tears over that result. But it is mistaken. Principle counts for something among our white voters. Vandalism did not carry Ohio when he ran for Governor two years ago, and yet the blacks of that State were not "enfranchised." White votes will still tell—and on the side of the Union, too, in spite of the Tribune's croakings.

The Next Presidency—The Drift of Public Sentiment.

From the N. Y. Times. The Democratic organs continue their exultations over the result of the late elections. This is both natural and proper, though it seems to us a good deal overdone. Practically—so far as offices go—they have gained very little by them; their importance consists wholly in the evidence they afford of a change in the political sentiment of the country. The Democrats look upon this change as rendering absolutely certain the return of their party to power. In this we think they will be very much mistaken. We look upon it as much more likely to render that event impossible.

The late elections, in our judgment, will compel the Republican party to make General Grant their Presidential candidate. They dare not nominate anybody else, however much very many of their "leaders" would like to do so. If Ohio and Pennsylvania had gone Republican by as large majorities as they did two years ago, and if the fall elections generally had shown no abatement of Republican strength, the party would have felt reasonably sure of electing any man they might nominate, and probably Judge Chase would have been their candidate. But such a proceeding now would be by no means safe. The elections show, beyond all controversy, a revulsion in public sentiment against the measures and policy with which Judge Chase is most closely identified. He is more thoroughly committed to the principle of universal negro suffrage than any other public man of equal prominence as a candidate; and that principle has been most distinctly and decisively repudiated in Ohio. It is all very well to say that the Republican party cannot abandon it—that they must "fight on," and "rally fresh to the combat," and "keep the banner of eternal justice very high," and all that sort of thing. So it may, and so it should; but it does not intend to be beaten in the next election. The party does not see very well how the cause of justice and the rights of the negro are to be aided by the election of a Copperhead President; and it does not intend to permit any such result. It will go in to win, and it will nominate as its candidate the man who is most sure to be elected.

No one can doubt, or fail to see, that the sentiment of the whole country points to Grant as that man. Nine-tenths of all the Republican journals and politicians of the country look upon his nomination as an absolute necessity, and as an equally absolute certainty. Four months ago we said that the time was not far off when "the very existence of the Republican party, as well as the welfare of the country," would be seen to demand his nomination. It was just as imperative a necessity then as it is now; but it was not so generally seen and known to be such. It needed the elections which have just been held to open the nation's eyes to the fact.

Now General Grant, as the candidate of the Union and Republican party, will come nearer to being elected unanimously than any other man since James Monroe. The Democratic party cannot put in nomination any man who can hold the field against him, or get even a respectable minority vote. He will take one-fourth of the whole Democratic vote in every Northern and Western State. Indeed, we do not regard it as by any means certain that the Democratic party would nominate a candidate against him; but the result would be the same in either case. Nor will it be at all affected by the nomination of a radical candidate, through such a movement as was attempted at Cleveland in 1864 against Mr. Lincoln. Such a nomination would swell the vote which Grant would receive from the Democrats, far more than it would weaken the Republican support.

General Grant's election we shall regard as the crisis and consummation of the whole movement, which began with the war against secession, and which still remains unaccomplished. He has the confidence of the whole country—of all the people in all sections and of all parties. No man can, even in thought, impugn his patriotism, or doubt his absolute and complete devotion to the Union cause. It would, perhaps, be too much to say that but for him the Rebellion would have triumphed—for we cannot admit that its suppression depended upon any one man—but certainly no one man did anything like so much as he to effect its defeat and overthrow. His services in the war, his faith in the Union, his steady, unflinching perseverance in the measures he deemed essential to success, the calm self-reliance, the undisturbed equanimity with which he met reverses when reverses came, and prosecuted the war to the glorious victory by which it was finally crowned, have given him a hold upon the people of the whole country which no intrigues of party can in the least disturb. His position on the various questions which have disturbed and divided the country is one which will vindicate itself against malevolent or factious assault from any quarter.

When the war closed he urged the most speedy restoration of the Union, consistent with the principles on which the war had been waged, and which the victory had established as essential to the peace and safety of the country, and he now comes forward, from that time forward, to press upon the South the acceptance of the measures which would conduce most promptly to the attainment of that end. His public views are not, in the slightest degree, the result of his passion or his resentment; neither party feeling nor personal interest has any share in the formation of his opinions or the guidance of his conduct: he acts solely from a calm conviction of what is required for the public good. Neither radical nor conservative, in his opinions or his acts, so far as those words have acquired a party meaning, he has the confidence of all parties in the integrity of his motives, the unselfishness of his views, and the practical, straightforward character of his mind. His election would disarm all hostilities, and induce a cordial cooperation of all classes and all parties in the great work of the practical reconstruction and restoration of the Union to more than its old harmony and prosperity.

After great convulsions like that through which we have just passed, there comes a time when party resentments lose their fervor and their force—when the contending sides grow calm from weariness, and when men are glad to seek again the peace and rest to which they have been strangers so long. Great communities, after long contention, are glad to abandon the hope of settling their troubles by the strife of faction, and are only too glad to put their trust in some one man, who has challenged their admiration by his ability, and commanded their confidence by his fidelity and unselfish devotion to the public good. Such a moment has arrived for us. The people of this country, disgusted by the unseemly and profitless wrangles of the last two years, hopeless of reaching national union through the violence and bitterness by which they have been marked, will be only too glad to place their trust in some one man, as a leader as General Grant. His administration will dissolve hostile parties, and lead inevitably to new organizations and new combinations better adapted to the emergencies of the times than those which have already outlived their day, and are rather hindering than aiding the great work which the necessities of the day demand.

Can Reconstruction Be Reversed? From the N. Y. Tribune. Some of our Democratic friends are working themselves into the belief that the reconstruction policy adopted by Congress can be reversed, and the laws passed last winter for the organization of State governments on the basis of impartial suffrage can be repealed, by Democratic victories this fall. Suppose the victories won, what would be the result? No members of either House of Congress can be elected until 1868. It would be in vain to ask the present Senate and House to repeal the laws which by a two-third vote they have adopted, and return to the President's policy of reconstructing the South on the basis of the white vote only, nine-tenths of which are Rebel and pro-slavery. For nearly two years after President Johnson came into power, the policy of reconstruction on the white vote only was fully tested. Its fruits were the black States of South Carolina, Mississippi, Georgia, and other States, for the reenslavement of the freedmen, debarring them from owning lands, hiring houses, disposing freely of their services, and providing them the knout and the lash as a substitute for wages, and the Fugitive Slave law, with its bloodhounds, as a remedy for discontent.

Laws were passed by the Legislatures and municipal governments elected by the white vote only, disarming the colored soldiers who had fought for the Union, taxing severely all occupations followed by colored men, limiting their right to testify as witnesses in courts, and to meet in public assemblies. Not a single law providing for the education of freedmen was passed. Acts abolishing slavery and repealing the ordinance of secession were wrong from them only by moral coercion and under protest. But further than this none of them could be driven. Nowhere did they give equal, or any civil rights to the blacks. A black man must live out for the whole year during the most disadvantageous season, viz., the first weeks in January, thus excluding him from all employments but agricultural and menial labor, for in no others would employers hire for so long a term; he was forbidden either to buy or hire a house or land, thus breaking up that first and highest element of freedom, the family, and compelling all its members to live as menials in white families or field hands on white men's plantations. If permitted to testify in court at all, it was before a judge whom he had no vote in electing, and a jury from which all of his race were excluded. Justice, to him, was an impossibility. A different code of rights, of punishments, of taxes, was made out for him from that which governed his white master. If these barbarous and oppressive laws needed enforcement, a Rebel sheriff was authorized to call upon a Rebel governor, who summoned into the field the same Rebel armies that surrendered at Appomattox, commanded by the same officers, and whose organization was continued under the name of State militias. The race thus sought to be oppressed were two-thirds of the people in South Carolina, three-fifths in Mississippi and Louisiana, and one-third in the entire South. The blacks saw that their coveted liberty, proclaimed by Lincoln, was vanishing under Johnson's system of reconstruction. They cried out in agony that their condition was tenfold worse than when in slavery. Then they had each but one master, and his heart might soften. "Now," said they, "we serve a mob, and it is merciless." Negro-killing became the amusement of the chivalry. If a negro looked impudently, he was shot. If

held to be industrious, his property was confiscated. If he sought higher wages, he was sent to jail for idleness. If he got out of work, he was sold as a slave. Fifteen hundred murders of negroes, for which nobody was arrested, were reported in Texas. Daily, he-murders were perpetrated, and went unpunished, in every Johnsonized State. The Freedmen's Bureau and our military officers were powerless to stop this incipient war against the black race. For want of the ballot, every means adopted to protect them was inadequate. Rebels and Democrats were equally furious in denunciation both of the Freedmen's Bureau and of our military occupation of the South, which were all that saved the trembling blacks from an immediate return to slavery. The President, to stop the "obnoxious" of the late Rebels, was too rapidly withdrawing the troops and working to abolish the Bureau. Before the freedmen there were but three alternatives—the ballot, extermination, or slavery. All sensible men saw that partial suffrage was perpetual war, and that white suffrage meant a war of races. President Lincoln on numerous occasions, and President Johnson in his letter to Governor Sharkey, had recommended that the suffrage be given to all blacks who could read and write. The South received the proposition with greater scorn than it afterwards showed towards universal suffrage. Evidently, it was in vain to look to the white vote of the South for a remedy. That was itself the disease. There was no remedy save in Congress. That body could not have proceeded with greater deliberation. It proposed to the white vote of the South a scheme by which it might still rule the South absolutely, provided it would consent that each Northern man's vote should have the same weight in electing Representatives to Congress as that of each Southern voter, and that certain classes of Rebels should not hold Federal offices. The South rejected with scorn any proposition by which they could not send Lee and Davis to the Senate or vote for them for the Presidency. They demanded with equal hauteur that their old mode of voting not only for themselves but for the blacks should not be invaded—nay, should be enlarged by emancipation, so that the whites who formerly voted for three-fifths of the blacks should now have added to their aggregate vote the power of one full vote for every colored man at the South, whether that colored man should vote or not. They demanded that a white Rebel South Carolinian's vote should not only vote down two loyal disfranchised black South Carolinians, but three New Yorkers, making five in all.

Still Congress deliberated for another year, until the unmistakable voice of the people in condemnation of the President's policy, and the condemnation of the white vote of the South, and the restoration of the white suffrage system in the negro States at New Orleans and Memphis, compelled them to enact by law some just and statesmanlike plan for restoring loyal governments to the South, and the Southern States to Congress. For two years the white vote had been only renewing rebellion, restoring slavery, and "organizing hell." What the South needed was a new constituency—in love with freedom and loyal to the Union. Congress called it into existence by extending suffrage to the blacks. Immediately the impending war of party, and the danger of a retrograde step in billings and cooing, in which leading Rebels vied with each other in accepting the situation, and in patronizing and instructing the black vote. As by magic the negro-killers desisted from their inhuman pursuit, not knowing how soon blacks might have the lawful power to punish them. Legislatures allowed blacks to testify. The stream of justice began to lave the shores of oppressed labor. The thought of restoring slavery was no more. In all but the mere formula of electing State governments, and admitting representatives to Congress, the South was at peace. The ballot was peace!

What if a President is soured because the peace did not come by his plan, and did come by another? What if some thousands of lagard Republicans fail to come to the polls and vote to sustain these results as they ought to do? Does that mean that the nation has decided to reverse impartial suffrage, the very promise of which, disseminated in advance by the whole South, has brought peace yet a ballot has been cast? Does it mean that we are to consign the black race, and with it the white, of the South again to slavery? By no means! The Democratic party can as well repeal emancipation or the Declaration of Independence as impartial suffrage. Whatever may be the course of future elections, reconstruction will, beyond peradventure, go on in the manner enacted by Congress, and a refusal to cooperate therein by the Rebel vote of the South will only result in their self-exclusion from all offices and power in the State and in the Nation. Government. If they by their inaction voluntarily hand over the management of their States to the blacks, there be the blame. We have reason to believe the blacks alone would prove quite as good governors as the whites alone have been. They certainly could do no worse, either for the South or for the Union.

How Is It Done? From the N. Y. World. The World is asked as a question the other day which deserves an answer. Citing the fact that the law forbids the sale of whisky, which may be sold by the Government, for less than the amount of the tax imposed thereon, and assuming \$175 to be the highest price it has reached since March last, the World is "curious to know how the Government has decided to dispose of it." Inasmuch as the tax is \$2 on each gallon, the World is mistaken in assuming that it is the highest price that whisky has reached since March. It reached \$2 for a few days very soon after the organization of the Metropolitan Board of Health.

How the sale of spirit whisky has been disposed of in New York, we are not aware; but we understand from reliable authority that in Brooklyn it has been sold at \$2 per gallon, and has been sold at \$2, and that \$50,000 gallons were sold at this price to a single firm at one time. As soon as any whisky is seized in Brooklyn, it is gauged and inspected, and put in custody of the United States Marshal. Whenever it is taken out of his hands for sale, it is gauged and inspected again, and the amount, if any, that may have been lost, by leakage or otherwise, is accurately and distinctly known. Every gallon sold by authority of the Government is sold at \$2 per gallon, and for every gallon sold in Brooklyn, the full price has been obtained. We cannot, as yet, answer the World's inquiry in regard to New York, but presume the facts will be found to be the same.

Mr. Courtney writes us a note to say that he is informed by Marshal Murray that all whisky sold by decree of the Court has been sold at \$2 per gallon, and some as high as \$2-05. He adds that every gallon sold, by order of Court, is a proof gallon, and at least \$2 per gallon has been paid. The statement in the Times being, we infer, on the authority of Mr. Tracy, both the District Attorneys aver that for every gallon of whisky sold in their respective districts, on orders of Court procured by them, not less than two dollars per gallon has been paid to the Marshal. This statement, it will be seen, does not answer our original inquiry. "How is it done?" In order that the public may, at the outset, get a full view of the bearings of the matter under consideration, we quote two sections of the act of Congress of March 2, 1867: Sec. 21. And be it further enacted, That whenever any distilled spirits, so found else-

where than in a bonded warehouse, shall be sold, or offered for sale, at a price less than the tax imposed by law thereon, such selling or offering for sale or offer shall be taken and deemed as prima facie evidence that said spirits have not been removed from a bonded warehouse according to law, and that the tax imposed by law on the same has not been paid, and the same shall, without further evidence, be liable to seizure and forfeiture: Provided, That this section shall not apply to spirits sold at public sale, or by auction, or in such cases as the special tax as such, under such rules and regulations, and upon such public notice, as may be prescribed by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue nor to sales made by judicial or executive officers under the order or decree of any court. Sec. 22. And be it further enacted, That no distilled spirits which have been forfeited to the Government in accordance with law, shall be sold for a price less than the amount of the tax imposed thereon, or for less than the amount of the tax, and the officer, having such spirits in charge, shall have no power, for a period of ninety days, to sell the same for a price equal to the tax, but shall be destroyed, under such rules and regulations as the Commissioner of Internal Revenue may prescribe.

It is clear that by this legislation Congress intended to prohibit and prevent every consumer in this country (whether as a beverage or for other purposes) from getting a gallon of whisky for a less sum than the amount of the tax. No matter whether the policy be wise or unwise, the Federal Legislature intended that by means of no bogus sales, pretended contracts, or any manner of indirection, should anybody, anywhere, get a proof-gallon of spirits for less than two dollars. And to be consistent, Congress provided that if the Government fell into possession of any whisky, it should be destroyed rather than be sold for less than the tax.

The practical effect of the twenty-first section of the law which we have quoted is that market price of spirits currently give the price of whisky out of bond, or "elsewhere than in a bonded warehouse." The much extolled (in their own estimation) Revenue Board has not been able by three months' effort to make it safe for dealers in whisky to give publicly the price, "tax-paid!" If we believe the market reports, there is no consumption of whisky, it being never out of bond. This state of things, while it makes it somewhat difficult to establish the market price in New York of a proof gallon of whisky, makes it at the same time clear that it does not bring \$2.

We have, however, satisfied ourselves by undoubted testimony drawn from many sources, that the prices of free whisky have this year ranged as follows:— In June, \$1-15 to \$1-25. In July, \$1-55 to \$2-05. In August, \$1-45 to \$1-60. In September, \$1-52 to \$1-65. The dates are suggestive. The law was passed in March, and the Revenue Board organized June 21.

Now, unless all the condemned whisky in New York and Brooklyn, amounting to many thousand gallons, sold previous to the first day of this present month, was sold on the "very few days" in July when the price jumped up to \$2-05, the public will be as certain as ourselves to know how it can be that a Government auctioneer could sell at a price so far above known prices in the street.

We pass by the laughable commentary upon the way the Metropolitan Board reforms matters, which is afforded by the claim, that the Government cannot at a sale get more at the end of seven months' effort than the tax; a circumstance holding out bright hopes to all honest distillers, under Mr. McCulloch's administration. We were asked what motive the judicial or executive officers, including district attorneys, marshals, and informers, can have to get up sales which are bogus, and in fraud of the spirit and letter of the law, we reply that unless a sale for two dollars is reported, the whisky must, at the end of three months, be destroyed; and if destroyed, these officers lose their large percentages of the value of the confiscated property. We cannot come to any other conclusion than that the replies of the District Attorneys are superficial, so far as the gist of our inquiry is concerned, and that, upon probing the matter deeply, they will find it necessary to admit that whisky demoralization has reached the sales referred to. Can it be that the District Attorneys who, on the Revenue Board, had to deal daily with the fact that whisky was selling for less than the tax, never wondered how it happened that the whisky in which they were interested could be sold for a sum equal to the tax? Did it never occur to them to inquire of the purchasers? It cannot be that, under the twenty-ninth section, it would be tolerated by the law officers that informers should, out of their share, settle with the purchaser for the difference between \$2 and the market price, any more than such hush-money would be permitted, as between private purchasers, under the twenty-first section.

We commend to the law officers of the Government a careful examination into the manner of these whisky sales. How are they managed?

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